

RECOMMENDED

ACTIONS

REESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

To gain time in which to attempt a revised strategy in Viet-Nam, certain actions must be taken here at home to reassure a troubled public and appease an impatient Congress.

(1) Clarify the role of the President-elect

With the turbulent events of the year and the last few weeks in particular, the American people are undoubtedly uneasy about the transition period. The joint statement of President Johnson and President-elect Nixon was a good first reassuring step and gave Mr. Nixon a leg up on his first task--reestablishing a dialogue with the American people.

Upon assuming office, Mr. Nixon may want to revive the "fireside chat" forum for frequent briefings of the public on where we stand in Viet-Nam.

- The principal advantage of this type of contact is that the President--not the press--defines the substance of what is said.
- Press conferences would of course continue to play a major role, but periodic "chats" could greatly enhance President Nixon's stature as educator of a public opinion that still understands very little about the nature of the conflict in Viet-Nam and the rôle of the U. S. as a Pacific power.
- Perhaps some sort of "listening post" arrangement that served Mr. Nixon so well in the campaign could be devised.

(2) Clarify and integrate the rationale for the war

There are two aspects of the rationale for our involvement in Viet-Nam:

- why we acted;
- what we are trying to achieve.

The public debate has been confused by a tendency to blur the distinction between the two. Argumentation about the first has been excessively belabored while the second has received insufficient attention. For example, SEATO is fundamental to our justification for being in Viet-Nam, but its utility in eliciting support for what we are trying to do in Viet-Nam is only marginal.

Three steps are recommended to help integrate more fully our rationale:

- Educate people about the political nature of the war and the essentially political character of any settlement.
- Communicate the relationship between specific courses of action and desired outcomes in a way that is meaningful to the American people. Simply listing accomplishments--as has been the tendency in the past--is not sufficient.
- Try to humanize the Vietnamese by portraying the humanness of their concerns and way of life. After all, there will be a Vietnamese winner and a Vietnamese loser.

(3) Talk with the public, not at it

There are several lessons in the public affairs area Viet-Nam should have taught us:

(a) Communicate the bases for judgment

There is a tendency for people in positions of high administrative responsibility to develop a confidence in their own judgment that is difficult to communicate. But when the public is involved, officials frequently fail to realize that this confidence must be communicated with more than an announced decision.

- A Chief Executive cannot expect people to have confidence in his judgment simply because it is his. He must indicate what are some of the major considerations he has taken into account so that people will be brought into the decision.
- The people will allow the President significantly more latitude with respect to means than to ends.

(b) Practice understatement

It is well to avoid overstating today what will be regretted tomorrow. In short, we should stay with the adage of understatement and overperformance.

- First, the public should not be given to expect too much out of Paris and should be prepared for a long haul.

- Second, the military situation in South Viet-Nam must be portrayed with considerable candor.
- Third, the South Vietnamese should be heralded as taking over the effort only to the extent to which they clearly are.

(c) Avoid a debating psychology

Much of the public affairs program related to Viet-Nam to date has taken the form of a debate with the public--and its more vocal elements in particular.

- Certainly the dialogue with the American people must be one of substance, but an overbearing and fatigued "scoring of debating points" with the New Left and other critics is tedious and counter-productive.
- With Goethe, "Gefuhl is alles" ("Feeling is everything"), and the more the better that can be done to communicate the flavor of the conflict, the humanity of the people we are helping and the mood of confidence in East Asia.

(4) Revitalize our public information program

While events are the most effective molders of opinion and authoritative policy pronouncements run a close second, a coordinated public information program is essential.

Presently a host of offices in Washington and Saigon are in the public affairs business. The current effort, however, lacks integration and imagination. In particular:

- There has been a lack of systematic inventory, cross-referencing and distribution of public affairs materials.
- Information available is frequently inadequate, out of date, unconvincing or contradictory.
- Responsibilities for the collection, evaluation and use of Viet-Nam-related information have not been delineated.

It is proposed that a "Viet-Nam Information Office" be established in the Executive Office (perhaps as part of

the White House Viet-Nam group recommended elsewhere in this paper) to serve as the central reference point for all public affairs activities relating to Viet-Nam. Action offices would furnish relevant information and interpretive material on a systematic and regular basis. The Viet-Nam Information Office would in turn provide the participating user-offices with the following services:

- Establishment of an updated inventory of significant statements, correspondence, articles and research for inclusion in a topically indexed reference system
- Adaptation and updating of selected fact sheets, talking points, question-answer sets, research, etc. on priority topics, for use as research support in the preparation of official statements on Viet-Nam.
- Regular (e.g., weekly or bi-monthly) distribution of a bibliographical list and/or copies of significant new acquisitions for use by participating user-offices.
- Regular listing of upcoming major speeches and conferences having a Viet-Nam focus. Preparation of back-up and distribution materials as required.
- Regular collection and evaluation of feed-back reports from user-offices to help clarify priority information issues, assets, requirements, tasks and schedules.

(5) Involve the Congress

Congressional relations is a subject far beyond the scope of this paper. But one point does seem basic: until the Constitutional question of the advise and consent role of the Congress in limited war situations is resolved, the Congress must be given a sense of participation in the making of our Viet-Nam policy.

Actions to bring the Congress more into Viet-Nam policy matters might include:

- Congressional representation at the Paris talks.
- Increased contact between U.S. and Vietnamese officials and politicians.
- Regular, complete and high level briefings that go considerably beyond those presently accorded senior members of Congress.

- High quality, persuasive and current public affairs material for both Congressional use with constituents and backgrounding of members of Congress not on committees with Viet-Nam-related responsibilities.

(6) Provide an instrument for the participation of politically relevant groups

To provide a medium for public involvement in the making of our Viet-Nam policy, the creation of a "blue ribbon" Advisory Committee should be considered. Its membership could be drawn from the Congress, the universities, the press, business and labor, and the minorities.

Among the Committee's responsibilities could be the following:

- to provide a channel for new perspectives and approaches in the search for a meaningful outcome in Viet-Nam;
- to serve as an informal medium for Vietnamese-American exchanges of visitors and viewpoints;
- to coordinate all private assistance to Viet-Nam;
- to assist in the development of post-hostilities plans for the Mekong region;
- to be tasked with specific Vietnamese-American study projects.

As regards two of the more troublesome groups:

- There is virtually no possibility of bringing the New Left in support of our policies in Viet-Nam. The history of its dissent makes clear its protest is a rejection of the current order--its values, its establishment, its style--and Viet-Nam is but one part of something far more fundamental.
- The press will probably be less bothersome in the months ahead. It is increasingly a more experienced press. Also the Mission and MACV have abandoned their hard sell approach to briefings.

BUILDING A POLITICALLY VIABLE SOUTH VIET-NAM

Political development in South Viet-Nam has been retarded primarily for three reasons:

- an unfortunate colonial experience under the French;
- the everpresent backdrop of war;
- the lingering forces of tradition and the vested interests of the few.

We thus find ourselves in an almost impossible situation-- political development must be accelerated but at the same time political stability must be maintained.

Recurring Endemic Problems

The generally recognized endemic problems have remained with us since 1954. Any list of "must measures" to solve Vietnamese political problems has always contained most of the following:

- Creating a sense of urgency among the political elite for the necessity for reform
- Broadening the political base of the government
- Encouraging cooperation among the nationalist leaders
- Depoliticizing the various religious groups
- Accommodating the ethnic minorities
- Appealing to the youth and disaffected young intellectuals
- Strengthening local political organizations
- Promoting political parties
- Strengthening and reforming the GVN institutional structure
- Developing a viable and rational economic infrastructure
- Reforming the leadership elite
- Improving the system of justice
- Developing a political/administrative system capable of responding to the felt needs of the populace

The difficulty has been that these measures have never been implemented. Among the reasons they have never been implemented are:

- (1) There were too many programs being insisted on by too many Americans with demands for immediate progress.
- (2) Many of the programs involved required actions viewed by Vietnamese leadership as threatening their survival.
- (3) Some of the programs were inappropriate to the Vietnamese milieu, particularly in insisting that the Vietnamese take actions which they were totally incapable of taking. Additionally, the tendency of Americans, as the programs failed to achieve the desired results, was to increasingly Americanize them with our money, effort, and leadership, thus negating our initial objective of building a viable and self-sufficient South Viet-Nam.
- (4) We never directly addressed with the GVN the penalties for failure to make change. We propped up an ineffective structure rather than building pressures for change.

Thus, any actions to strengthen South Vietnam must consider at a minimum the following:

- The actions must be designed, in conjunction with Vietnamese, to attack the basic problems.
- The actions must be tailored to the possible--with regard to the existing Vietnamese leadership and the existing institutional structure.
- The number of priority actions should be reduced.
- The American presence should be minimized.
- The actions must be truly combined US-Vietnamese ventures--with the Vietnamese leading in most cases. Further, both the US and GVN should understand clearly what these actions are and what the penalties are for GVN failure to effect change.

Recommended Actions

Combined US-Vietnamese actions to address effectively the endemic problems of the Vietnamese political-economic system can be obtained through the following:

- (1) Establish a small number of Special Assistants to the key GVN leaders. These Special Assistants and their counterparts will represent "operational pairs" which can address the full range of problems and their solutions in a give-and-take and objective way. Further, these operational pairs can be the leading edge for accomplishing such important tasks as defining a South Vietnamese national goal meaningful to the people and capable of accomplishment; establishing a meaningful dialogue between US agents and South Vietnamese leaders; establishing a political frame of reference between South Vietnam and ourselves which makes our conditions for support clear; and getting home the difficult message to the Vietnamese elite that, contrary to their belief, their survival is dependent upon their implementing those very programs which seem to threaten it. The Special Assistants should also work with and assist Vietnamese political elite to better equip themselves with the skills they need to survive in a changing political system--to mitigate their fears for their own survival.
- (2) Establish a combined US/GVN Commission for economic and agricultural development similar to the Joint Commission for Rural Rehabilitation in Nationalist China. The Commission would have a majority of Vietnamese commissioners and would have funds and commodities for its own use.

Specific Vietnamese actions, building on existing conditions and institutional structure, which should be emphasized during the forthcoming months are:

- (1) Improving two way political communications by making the Lower House of the National Assembly continue and expand its role as a line of communication between the Vietnamese people and the central government. Emphasis must be upon the Deputy as a representative of his constituency, not upon his role as a member of the central government.

- (2) Broadening political participation by accommodating the religious and ethnic minority groups through actions which allow them to retain their autonomy to a large degree but, at the same time, involved them in the decisions and responsibilities of the central government.
- (3) Developing a functioning political system reorienting the pacification program to emphasize political development instead of self help.
- (4) Developing natural cohesiveness by reorienting the Armed Forces to serve as a nation-building force and by permitting participation in Vietnamese affairs by patriotic exiled nationalists.

Specific American actions which should be emphasized during the next year are:

- (1) Reducing, systematically, rapidly, and in consultation with the GVN the numbers of American advisors--particularly in AID and CORDS.
- (2) Phasing down (and, in some cases, out) of many of the programs presently being carried out in Vietnam which are not germane to the critical issues. Selection of programs should be made in consultation with the GVN. The criterion for reduction should be that, regardless of agency, only those programs with direct applicability should remain. The criteria for direct applicability should be two fold: the extent to which a program significantly improves (a) local security for the population, (b) the administrative/political capability of the GVN.

The above program is one to induce change in the Vietnamese political system, not through the massive influx of American advisors and resources but through the selective use of a small number of specially qualified Americans. In this way maximum leverage can be placed on the Vietnamese political process in the places and on the occasions that count. Fundamental to this approach is a clear understanding between the US and South Viet-Nam of the terms on which we will continue to support their effort. Rather than prop up an insecure political elite with massive aid, this approach suggests that through the non-selective use of our greatest resource--knowledgeable Americans--we can better help the South Vietnamese leaders learn how to survive in a changing system and to link themselves more completely to the rural population which is now virtually left out of the nationalist political union.

STRENGTHENING SOUTH VIET-NAM MILITARY

Improvement in RVNAF organization, leadership and performance is a matter of the highest priority. Any strategy--military or political--rests largely on the capability of RVNAF inflicting off the VC/NVA.

Some Military Realities

There are some hard military realities that must be acknowledged at the outset:

(1) The Allies have been unable to defeat the enemy militarily--even the most optimistic estimates do not predict an early enemy collapse. Of course, the enemy cannot win a military victory either.

(2) The enemy's response to this stalemated situation has been to shift the focus of his strategy toward the attainment of political objectives. ~~At the moment, the VC/NVA appears to be maximizing his military objectives.~~ The VC/NVA now direct most of their military activities toward political--not military objectives. In pursuing a fight-while-negotiating strategy, the enemy is working to strengthen his political position by:

- eroding and eventually eliminating the control of the GVN throughout South Viet-Nam;

- expanding and consolidating the VC/NLF hold on the rural population;

- discrediting and demoralizing the RVNAF;

- keeping the pressure on U.S. public opinion by continuing to inflict casualties.

- The focus of this strategy is thus the South Vietnamese population. The intention is to keep the heat on and try to create a political climate in which the VC/NLF appears supreme and the tide seems to be running against the GVN. To do this the enemy concentrates on small unit actions and a high incidence of harassment, terrorism and selected ~~attacks~~ atrocities as object lessons.

(3) The 200,000 armed South Vietnamese who are assigned to counter this strategy and to provide local security are inadequate both in impact and numbers. ~~Yamkthamkaxnaxtimsminxneorganize~~

- Although many actions to address endemic problems of RVNAF are underway, these tend to be in the nature of palliatives which do not attack the core problems directly.

- RVNAF does not appear to be working to correct its various deficiencies with the urgency the situation merits.

- There is not time to reorganize and reorient RVNAF into what would be the ideal fighting force for the tasks that lie ahead. Further, we have demonstrated little capacity in advising in such restructuring and another attempt now could prove counterproductive.

(4) The NVA forces retain an undiminished capability to intervene in South Viet-Nam in a massive way. Although many NVA units have withdrawn inside the borders of Cambodia, Laos and North Viet-Nam, these units can reenter South Viet-Nam with relative ease and mount an offensive comparable in size and scope to that at Tet. Even if all NVA units withdrew, VC units would still pose a significant threat.

- In response to this threat U.S. and RVNAF units divide their attention between two almost diametrically opposed objectives: the establishment of territorial security and the protection of South Viet-Nam from external aggression.

- Regardless of the direction of the talks in Paris, it is unlikely that the North Vietnamese will seriously diminish as a threat capable of reentering South Viet-Nam with ease and intervening militarily.

Recommended Actions

There are three overall objectives we should pursue militarily:

- provision of territorial security;
- increased RVNAF capability of assuming the burden;
- decreased enemy capability of mounting a large

(1) Increase territorial security and pacification operations aimed at expanding GVN influence and diminishing the VC supporting structure and their guerrilla and local force units.

- Reorientation of GVN strategy toward provision of territorial security and away from countering VC/NVA main force units;

Give

- priority attention to the territorial security forces through the increasing of force levels and detailing of ARVN officers and NCO's to fill leadership shortages;
- Establishment of a constabulary force through the selection and detail of RVNAF units;
- Augmentation of territorial security forces as required with ARVN maneuver battalions to provide local security in selected districts;
- Reward *unit and individual performance* through promotions, medals and publicity.

(2) Increase self confidence among the Vietnamese so they will be better able to assume a greater share of the burden and confront the enemy politically.

- There are quite a few RVNAF and perhaps some RF units which have demonstrated the capability of operating effectively without American advisors. Thus, a first action in this area might be to decrease the number of American advisors assigned to RVNAF units. ~~For several years, American advisors have been assigned to RVNAF units in the form of advisors, which has been a major problem.~~
- For years we have referred to the Vietnamese as our comrades-in-arms, yet little has been done to give substance to these words. A step would be to establish some combined commands--particularly in IV Corps--in which senior ARVN officers were given command and control over U.S. units. In the past this has generally been resisted by U.S. commanders, but their fears are often overwrought as the Vietnamese are really much more interested in the form than the substance. This is not to suggest the Vietnamese should not be in command; rather it is to say they would exercise their authority with Oriental discretion.

(3) Counter the VC/NVA mainforce capability of initiating another massive offensive comparable to that at Tet.

Since the inception of large scale North Vietnamese intervention, U.S. and GVN commanders have always been faced with a dilemma:

- If forces are deployed to check enemy main force units, the South Vietnamese populace is exposed--as at Tet last year.
- Yet on the other hand, if forces are deployed to provide local security, the main force units are free to roam at will.

However, it is becoming increasingly evident that:

- The U.S. and Vietnamese forces have never really devoted much attention to the provision of local security. (Would suggest here some data on deployment of forces and brief statement that things seem to be changing under Abrams.)
- The risk involved in deploying fewer forces to counter enemy main force movement may not be as great as our commanders have estimated. (This point needs to be developed further than in Cooke's draft.) It has been amply demonstrated that we cannot fulfill both roles ~~wikxx~~--territorial security and checking enemy main force--with the force levels available
- It has been amply demonstrated that we cannot fulfill both roles--territorial security and checking enemy main force movement--with the force levels available. It is increasingly urgent that we focus on the primary issue of local security and take the calculated risk of exposing ourselves in the secondary effort. This is especially urgent if the war is to be de-Americanized and if nationalist political organization is to have any chance of penetrating rural South Viet-Nam.

Three actions are recommended:

- Make clear and credible to the North Vietnamese that any major incursion of North Vietnamese units now withdrawn to Cambodia, Laos, and North Viet-Nam ~~wikk~~ into South Viet-Nam will be considered a provocation requiring immediate retaliation in North Viet-Nam.
- A majority of U.S. maneuver battalions should remain on 24-hour call to counter any such incursion.
- Long range covert patrolling should be increased considerably. ARVN maneuver battalions, however, should be withdrawn from this and shifted to the territorial security role.

ORGANIZING FOR POLITICAL WARFARE

Many of our difficulties with respect to Viet-Nam have been in the areas of strategy and policy, as brought out in other sections of this paper. Many, however have been due to organizational weaknesses - specifically failure to structure properly our political and military institutions at home and in Viet-Nam and to staff a few key positions with the right kind of people. Even the best strategy and wisest policies need proper organization, wisely led and staffed, to realize their full effectiveness. This is particularly true in political warfare, which requires sensitive integration of political, military, economic and psychological activities. It is particularly true also in the Orient, where success depends more on people than on organizations and programs and where men are measured and accepted more on the basis of their personal qualities than their job titles.

Inadequacy of the Present Arrangement

The frequent restructuring in Washington of institutions controlling the war clearly indicates organizational weakness.

- The Viet-Nam Task Forces, the Special Group (Counter-insurgency), the Viet-Nam Interagency Committee, the Special Assistant to the President for Pacification (Komer), the Eleven O'clock Group, have all attempted to manage and direct the war. All of these made some initial impacts on management and direction of the war and then faded and diminished until their existence was superfluous to the problem. At present, the management and direction of the war is essentially in the hands of the separate agency chiefs and Mr. Rostow.
- Thus, while the most vital aspect of the entire conflict has been its essential political nature, responsibility has remained divided essentially between the major Departments of the government and the White House. In utilizing the existing structure in Washington, the President, while able to direct tangible decisions, such as troop deployments or bombing starts and stops, has been unable to exact positive influence upon less tangible, but perhaps more significant activities such as internal political development in South Viet-Nam.

In South Viet-Nam the U.S. Mission has gone through a series of reorganizations in its attempts to solve the problem of control.

- The crucial equation was how to mesh the military efforts into the essentially political nature of the war. The problem, while recognized by some as early as 1961, was not really addressed directly until 1967. Up to that time various experiments were tried. One was to make General Maxwell Taylor the Ambassador, apparently in the hope that he, as a senior US general, could and would direct MACV as well as the civilian efforts, so that they would be mutually supporting.
- The next attempt was to focus US responsibility for pacification upon Deputy Ambassador Porter who was given a Special Assistant for MACV (who also headed MACV's pacification section). Partly due to Ambassador Porter's other duties and partly due to his reluctance to exercise the full range of his charter, this effort was eventually superceded by the formation of the Office for Civil Operations which drew all US civilian pacification efforts regardless of agency, under one head; MACV, however, remained a separate entity.
- The present organization under COMUSMACV -- Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) -- in theory, draws together all US assets and efforts in pacification under one roof.
- Despite all US efforts, the essential requirement of establishing GVN presence in the countryside, nationwide, has not been accomplished. Further, neither US nor Vietnamese military efforts can be characterized as effectively supporting this objective.

Unclear priorities and improper organization in Washington and Saigon not only has prevented us from attacking the major component of the war in an effective manner, but has also led to, or made major contributions toward, ineffectiveness in several other important areas. Among these has been the failure to explain the war to the US public in terms meaningful and acceptable to them.

The lack of an effective U.S. organization for prosecuting this kind of war, or for that matter, the kind of peace we will have to pursue, stems primarily from two causes.

- The large, unwieldy and bureaucratic nature of the five agencies most directly concerned with the war -- State, Defense, CIA, USIA, and AID. The establishment of the same independent agency structure on the ground in Viet-Nam has in effect been a perpetuation of the traditional situation in Washington. This system functions passably in time of domestic and international tranquility, when most matters are routine, but not when innovation is the key in a time of stress.

- The lack of a clear and consistent concept of U.S. objectives in Viet-Nam and a related plan for winning the war, properly focussed on its essential political nature. Instead, the diverse compartmentalized agencies of Washington were turned loose in Viet-Nam to do what they thought best -- without a unifying idea or organization. The lack of a concept has nurtured the existing tendency of the various agencies in Viet-Nam to go their own way rather than function as a coordinated team.

There are then two related needs to be met if we are to have better U.S. organization for the Viet-Nam struggle. The first need is for a more unified concept and the second is for a more unified organization which reflects this concept in its structure and composition of personnel.

The need for these changes will be even more urgent if the shooting stops and the struggle becomes more openly political in nature. We should keep in mind that the other side has always seen the struggle in essentially political terms in which military operations are only one means to a political end.

Organizational Alternatives

There seem to be four basic alternatives:

(1) Retain the present arrangement

One alternative is to keep the present US organization in both Saigon and Washington, changing personnel as required. There is no reason to believe this will be any more effective than past efforts.

(2) Place authority in a lead agency

A second alternative is to invest one of the existing departments or agencies with total authority to direct the U.S. political warfare effort. Examination of each of the major departments reveals certain weaknesses:

- State has some capability in this arena, but it is neither structured or staffed to handle political warfare. First, it is structured to report and assist existing governments not to help create governments. Thus political warfare is distinct from its normal operations. Secondly, State is not operations oriented and, while perhaps strong in the policy realm, has little ability to "run" a program.

- AID has no major field operations except for Vietnam, and it lost control of most of these with the formation of CORDS. A larger problem is the quality of personnel AID can field generally. Further, AID is primarily program-oriented to the extent that it occasionally loses sight of the overall policy and strategy and objectives.
- CIA has had the most experience in political warfare operations and perhaps is the most capable of carrying out the mission. However, there are major contradictions between CIA's overt political warfare activities and its covert intelligence activities. Overt and covert methods are incompatible in many respects and often compromise each other. Additionally, because of the primacy of their covert methods, CIA tends to project a bad psychological image worldwide, thus further tending to discredit anything they might do in the political warfare realm.
- DOD also would have difficulties. The US military, unfortunately, has not demonstrated the understanding of this kind of war nor the ability to run it. There are, certainly, military men who do understand it, but they are generally in the lower grades and are not listened to by the military hierarchy. The US military should not be given the mission. There is a distinct possibility that OSD could do the job; it is not so constrained by military doctrine or the vast military bureaucratic structure and it is sensitive to the political nature of the war. It is constrained, however, by two factors: (1) It has not assets or resources of its own, and must rely on military assets; (2) It has no control or decision over other US Government departments or agencies, and it is not clear that such control would be desirable. DOD has tried to control this type warfare through a Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. A first attempt worked for a while but finally ended with the battle between Krulak and Lansdale. Currently, another attempt is being made through the present Special Assistant to the CJCS (SACSA), but unfortunately, SACSA has had difficulty in avoiding the "by the numbers" thinkers and the use of "school solutions."

(3) Create a new agency

A third alternative would be to create a new federal agency to direct and control the US government's political warfare efforts. Among the several difficulties with such a solution are:

- adverse domestic and international political reaction;
- creation (in time) of another vast bureaucratic structure;
- incapacity of such an agency (unless specifically set up as a super-agency, more powerful than DOD and State) to control the activities of other US government departments.

These difficulties suggest that the formation of a new agency is not desirable.

(4) Establish a special White House staff

The fourth alternative would be a compromise solution, which would provide the President with greater control over the essential aspects of war and would improve inter-departmental teamwork and the meshing together of all plans and programs. The separate U.S. departments would continue most of their functions but certain reporting and planning functions would be assigned to a special White House staff.

A Possible Solution

We Americans are a problem-solving people. Indeed this is our unique genius. We seem to have an unshakable faith in the "solvability" of a problem -- that if enough resources and ingenuity are applied any problem can be overcome.

In Viet-Nam this problem-solving orientation has led us to a program approach in which action plans are spelled out and programs designed to meet needs. The history of our assistance effort in Viet-Nam is characterized by programs of many different origins and conceptions. When things were not going well we would restaff; if that did not work we would commit more resources; if things still did not improve we would reorganize. But always our response to the Vietnamese problem has been programmatic. Thus it has gone, and now as 196- approaches we confront essentially the same endemic problems we faced more than a decade ago.

One of the most disastrous consequences of our program orientation in Viet-Nam has been the formalization and impersonalization of relationships with the Vietnamese -- relationships that to be meaningful must necessarily be informal and personal. Our programs have clouded our understanding of the problems they are designed to address.

Certainly much of the difficulty is due simply to the scale of our effort and its large military component. But if in the months ahead the effort in Viet-Nam is to be "de-Americanized" the Americans remaining must become more and more "Vietnamesized." So too the sensitivities of our senior people in Washington must be honed to the subtleties of the Vietnamese milieu and the Vietnamese way of doing things. The distance -- both spatial and psychological -- between events in South Viet-Nam and the distilled perception of them in Washington must be narrowed. Otherwise we will progressively lose meaningful leverage over events as we progressively de-Americanize.

What is required -- and required most urgently -- is a flexible and relatively non-structured apparatus to link policy-planners more adequately with the field in Viet-Nam. The main function of such an apparatus would be to achieve an orchestration of the three crucial elements basic to a meaningful outcome in Viet-Nam:

- Presidential objectives
- the Vietnamese milieu
- Bureaucratic capabilities

Washington

In Washington such a function could best be performed by a special staff located in the White House, charged with keeping the President informed on the actual current situation and with providing him planning options for discussion with and execution by his agency chiefs. Initially this staff should concern itself with Vietnam, but as other political warfare crises arise elsewhere the staff could shift its attention and efforts.

The staff should be headed by an individual sufficient in stature to command the respect of the Secretaries of State and Defense and the President's National Security Advisor. He must also have direct access to the President. Additionally, he must have knowledge of and experience with the Washington bureaucracy and the capability to work with it, but he should not be a bureaucratic creature. He must have demonstrated sources of and receptivity to independent judgment from both within and without the government.

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- The director should be able to task the Federal Departments in the name of the President. He should have also confidential funds under his control to finance special projects and some discretionary authority over Viet-Nam-related spending of the principal agencies.
 - The director's staff should be made up of individuals who are intimately familiar with Viet-Nam and current in their knowledge. They should have:
 1. Demonstrated knowledge on a broad range of problems in Vietnam with the capability to see the war from the broad viewpoint.
 2. Demonstrated sensitivity to the Vietnamese social and political milieu and ability to communicate with the Vietnamese.
 3. Demonstrated capability for independent and original thinking devoid of parochial viewpoints.
 4. Demonstrated willingness to sacrifice personal gain in order to attain something meaningful for our country out of our Viet-Nam experience.
 - To perform its functions the staff must have direct communications with staff members of the various government departments as well as with the U.S. Government agencies in South Vietnam. A portion of the special staff should be frequently "on the ground" in Viet-Nam (but directly responsible to and operating from the Special Staff in Washington) examining policy execution and reporting on conditions. It is particularly important that the Special Staff have the authority and capability to ensure implementation of the President's decisions in the field in South Viet-Nam.

Viet-Nam

In Viet-Nam, the U.S. Mission should remain essentially intact and continue its present functions. Improvement is needed in the interface between the U.S. Mission and the GVN. A major step forward would be to place specially selected advisors with a few key Vietnamese leaders. In this paper, they are called "Special Assistants" in order to distinguish them from normal advisors. They would report ultimately to the new Viet-Nam group in the White House.

Models for the Special Assistant concept are Americans who have actually effected significant change within an Oriental milieu. Among them are: Major General Edward Lansdale in the Philippines, Admiral "Savvy" Cooke in Taiwan, Commodore "Mary" Miles in World War II China.

Certain principles can be deduced from the successes of these men.

- (1) Change in an Oriental Society can be effected by Westerners but from the top down, not from the bottom up.
- (2) Significant change comes from the impact of an individual personality upon the individual Oriental decision maker.
- (3) Change comes by the individual advisor being meshed into the oriental structure to the extent that he he is viewed by the orientals as understanding their interests and desires.
- (4) Change comes because the advisor can make clear to the Oriental decision maker that his own self interest is best served by following his advisor's recommendation.
- (5) Change does not come from forcing reorganization to conform to American notions of proper structure; nor by setting up American-type programs, nor by insisting on American forms of action.
- (6) Change comes from insisting only on matters of substance, not from making every difference a must issue.

The Special Assistants would represent a systematic approach to applying the above principles in South Viet-Nam.

- The function of the Special Assistant would be one of providing the Oriental decision maker with a different perception of his problems and their solution.
- The function of the Special Assistant would be to educate, to enlighten, to assist the Vietnamese with the skills they need to survive not to direct, control or manage them on their programs.
- The Special Assistant can not function if he is only a routine part of the American overseas bureaucratic structure.

- Selection of Special Assistants for individual Oriental leaders is critical and must be based upon personality, unity of purpose and a clear realization by the selected individual of his mission and method of operation.
- The numbers of Special Assistants required are small; decision on solution and assignments of the Special Assistants should be made in conjunction with the Vietnamese leaders.

It is not so important whether the Special Assistants are made part of the Mission agencies or are placed directly under the Ambassador (or Ambassador and COMUSMACV), but it is vital that they be protected from bureaucratic in-fighting. To ensure this protection and to provide a direct link to the White House Staff the Ambassador should have on his staff a Senior Assistant. This Assistant would supervise the activities of the Special Assistants, rule on their effectiveness and have sole authority under the Ambassador to remove them from their positions should that be necessary, provide the Ambassador information they report, and give them such special guidance as they might require. In addition he would represent the special White House Staff in Viet-Nam, having his own channels of communication with it.

The effect of this recommended organization in Washington and Viet-Nam would be to take a group of carefully selected Americans who have already shown they are sensitized to Oriental-Western relationships and have the ability to communicate with and excite action from the Vietnamese and place them in positions where they can affect the situation. It is a non-US agency approach which is flexible, sensitive and sophisticated--a non-programmed approach, oriented toward problem-solving. It proposes to proceed with flexible priorities rather than inflexible programs. It is designed to "Vietnamize" the war in contrast to the present "Americanization." It is designed to increase American influence in a non-visible fashion while, at the same time, allowing decrease of the visible American presence.